

Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application PCT/EP2003/012044 filed October 30, 2003

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-15 without prejudice, and add new claims 16-35, in accordance with the following complete listing of all claims ever presented. This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of the claims in the instant application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-15 (canceled)

Claim 16 (new): A process for the production of esters of organic carbonyl compounds with alcohols by carrying out an esterification reaction in the presence of a catalyst containing an inorganic phosphorus(I) compound and a titanate, which comprises:

- (1) mixing the organic carbonyl compound and the inorganic phosphorus(I) compound to form a mixture;
- (2) filtering the mixture;
- (3) adding the alcohol and the titanate to the filtered mixture to form an alcohol-carbonyl mixture; and
- (4) esterifying the carbonyl compound in the alcohol-carbonyl compound mixture.

Claim 17 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, the carbonyl compound comprises a fatty acid containing 8 to 22 carbon atoms.

Claim 18 (new): The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein, the carbonyl compound comprises a hydroxyfatty acid containing 8 to 22 carbon atoms.

Claim 19 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, the organic carbonyl compound comprises at least one fatty acid selected from the group consisting of

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polyfatty acids and polyhydroxyfatty acids with a degree of self-condensation of 2 to 20.

Claim 20 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, the alcohol comprises a polyol.

Claim 21 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, the titanate comprises a titanate which is capable of forming esters with the alcohol.

Claim 22 (new): The process as claimed in claim 21, wherein, the titanate is added in a quantity of 0.01 to 0.1% by weight, based on the total quantity of organic carbonyl compound, alcohol and catalyst.

Claim 23 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, a phosphorus(I) acid or salt thereof is used as the phosphorus(I) compound.

Claim 24 (new): The process as claimed in claim 23, wherein, the phosphorus(I) compound is present in a quantity of 0.1 to 1% by weight, based on the total quantity of organic carbonyl compound, alcohol and catalyst.

Claim 25 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, before the filtration step (2), an inorganic base is added to the mixture containing the organic carbonyl compound and the inorganic phosphorus(I) compound.

Claim 26 (new): The process as claimed in claim 25, wherein, the inorganic base is added in a quantity sufficient to neutralize the phosphorus(I) compound substantially completely.

Claim 27 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, in step (1) of the process, the organic carbonyl compound and the inorganic phosphorus(I) compound are mixed for at least 20 minutes at a temperature of from 20°C to 220°C.

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Claim 28 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, the esterification reaction is carried out in a melt or in a nonpolar, inert organic solvent.

Claim 29 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, the esterification reaction is carried out in a melt at a temperature below 240°C.

Claim 30 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, at least the esterification reaction is carried out in an inert gas atmosphere.

Claim 31 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, the alcohol comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of polyalkylene glycol, glycerol and polyglycerol.

Claim 32 (new): The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein, the titanate comprises a tetraalkyl orthotitanate.

Claim 33 (new): The process of claim 32, wherein, the titanate comprises at least one member selected from the group consisting of tetraisopropyl titanate and tetrabutyl titanate.

Claim 34 (new): The process of claim 25, wherein, the inorganic base comprises a carbonate.

Claim 35 (new): The process of claim 17, wherein, the fatty acid contains from 12 to 18 carbon atoms.